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[ONE PENNY.]

THE INFLUENCE OF THE IMMORTAL HOPE ON THE LIFE THAT NOW IS.

BY
G. DAWES HICKS, Ph.D., Litt.D.,
Professor of Moral Philosophy at the
University of London.
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N.B.—The name of the Minister of the Chapel is in all cases inserted, unless instructions are received to the contrary by Thursday morning before the date of issue.

SUNDAY, January 1.

LONDON.

Acton, Creffield-road, 11.15, Rev. T. P. SPEDDING; 7, Rev. A. C. HOLDEN.
 Bermondsey, Fort-road, 7, Mr. A. ALLEN.
 Blackfriars Mission and Stamford-street Chapel, 11 and 7, Rev. J. C. BALLANTYNE.
 Brixton, Unitarian Christian Church, Effra-road, 11 and 7, Rev. G. C. CRESSEY, D.D.
 Child's Hill, All Souls', Weech-road, Finchley-road, 11.15 and 6.30, Rev. EDGAR DAPLYN.
 Croydon, Free Christian Church, Wellesley-road, 11 and 7, Rev. W. J. JUPP.
 Essex Church, The Mall, Notting Hill Gate, 11, Rev. FRANK K. FREESTON, New Year Communion; 3.15, Scholars' Service; 7, Rev. R. K. DAVIES.
 Finchley (Church End), Fern Bank Hall, Gravel Hill, 6.30, Rev. J. A. PEARSON.
 Forest Gate, corner of Dunbar-road, Upton-lane, 11, Rev. J. ARTHUR PEARSON; 6.30, Rev. JOHN ELLIS.
 Hackney, New Gravel Pit Church, Chatham-place, 11.15 and 7.
 Hampstead, Rosslyn-hill Chapel, 11.15, Rev. H. GOW, B.A.; 6.30, Rev. STOPFORD A. BROOKE, M.A., Litt.D.
 Highgate-hill Unitarian Christian Church, 11 and 7, Rev. A. A. CHARLESWORTH.
 Ilford, High-road, 11 and 7, Rev. W. H. DRUMMOND, B.A.
 Islington, Unity Church, Upper-street, 11 and 7, Rev. Dr. TUDOR JONES.
 Kentish Town, Clarence-road, N.W., 11 and 7, Rev. F. HANKINSON.
 Kilburn, Quex-road, 11 and 7, Rev. C. ROPER.
 Lewisham, Unitarian Christian Church, High-street, 11 and 7, Rev. W. W. CHYNOWETH POPE.
 Deptford, Church and Mission, Church-street, 6.30.
 Mansford-street Church and Mission, Bethnal Green; 7, Rev. GORDON COOPER.
 Peckham, Avondale road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. LAWRENCE CLARE.
 Richmond, Free Church, Ormond-road, 11.15 and 7, Dr. F. W. G. FOAT, D.Litt, M.A.
 Stoke Newington Green, 11.15 and 7, Rev. J. LIONEL TAYLER.
 Stratford Unitarian Church, 11 Rev. JOHN ELLIS; 6.30, Mr. STANLEY P. PENWARDEN.
 University Hall, Gordon-square, 11.15 and 7, Rev. J. PAGE HOPPS.
 Wandsworth Unitarian Christian Church, East Hill, 11 and 7, Rev. W. G. TARRANT, B.A.
 Wimbledon, Smaller Worple Hall, Worple-road, 7, Mr. W. PIGGOTT.
 Wood Green Unity Church, 11, and 7, Rev. JOSEPH WILSON.
 Woolwich, Carmel Chapel, Anglesea-road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. L. JENKINS JONES.

ABERYSTWYTH, New Street Meeting House, 11 and 6.30. Supply.
 BATH, Trim-street Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. McDOWELL.
 BELFAST, All Souls' Church, Elmwood Avenue, 11.30 and 7, Rev. ELLISON A. VOYSEY, M.A.
 BIRMINGHAM, Old Meeting Church, Bristol-street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. JOSEPH WOOD.
 BIRMINGHAM, Church of the Messiah, Broad-street, Rev. J. WORSLEY AUSTIN.
 BLACKBURN, King William street, near Sudell Cross, 10.45 and 6.30.
 BLACKPOOL, Dickson-road, North Shore, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. J. HORACE SHORT.
 BLACKPOOL, South Shore Unitarian Free Church, Lytham-road South, 11 and 6.30.
 BOLTON, Halliwell-road Free Church, 10.45, Scholars' Service; 6.30, Rev. J. ISLAN JONES, M.A.
 BOURNEMOUTH, Unitarian Church, West Hill-road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. V. D. DAVIS.
 BRADFORD, Chapel Lane Chapel, 10.30 and 6.30, Rev. H. McLACHLAN.
 BRIGHTON, Free Christian Church, New-road, 11 and 7, Rev. PRIESTLEY PRIME.

BUXTON, Hartington-road Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. GEORGE STREET.

CHATHAM, Unitarian Christian Church, Hammond-hill 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. M. WHITEMAN.
 CHELMSFORD, Unitarian Church, Legg-street, 6.30, Mr. A. D. BEEKWITH.

CHESTER, Matthew Henry's Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. D. JENKIN EVANS.

CLIFTON, Oakfield-road Church, 11 and 6.30.

DOVER, Adrian-street, near Market-square, 11 and 6.30, Rev. C. A. GINEVER.

DUBLIN, Stephen's Green West, 12 and 7, Rev. E. SAVELL HICKS, M.A.

EVESHAM, Oat-street Chapel, 11 and 6.30, Rev. W. E. WILLIAMS, B.A.

GATESHEAD, Unity Church, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. W. WILSON.

GEE CROSS, 11 and 6.30, Rev. E. H. PICKERING.

GORTON, Brookfield Church, 10.45 and 6.30.

GUILDFORD, Ward-street Church, North-street, 11 and 6.30, Mr. GEORGE WARD.

HASTINGS, South Terrace, Queen's-road, 11, Rev. Rev. S. BURROWS; 6.30.

HORSHAM, Free Christian Church, Worthing-road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. J. MARTEN.

LEEDS, Mill Hill, 10.45, Rev. C. HARGROVE; 6.30, Rev. MATTHEW R. SCOTT.

LEICESTER, Free Christian Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. K. H. BOND.

LEICESTER, The Great Meeting, 11 and 6.30, Rev. EDGAR I. FRIPP, B.A.

LIVERPOOL, Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, 11 and 6.30, Rev. C. CRADDOCK.

LIVERPOOL, Hope-street Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. H. D. ROBERTS.

LIVERPOOL, Ullet-road, Sefton-park, 11, Rev. J. C. ODGERS, B.A.; 6.30, Rev. E. L. RUSSELL, B.A.

MAIDSTONE, Unitarian Church, Earl-street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. ALEXANDER FARQUHARSON.

MORETONHAMPTON, Devon, Cross Chapel, 11 and 3, Rev. A. LANCASTER.

NEW BRIGHTON and LISCARD, Memorial Church, Manor-road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. A. E. PARRY.

NEWPORT, Isle of Wight, Unitarian Church, High-street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. J. RUDDLE.

OXFORD, Manchester College, 11.30, Rev. Dr. CARPENTER.

PORTSMOUTH, High-street Chapel, 11 and 6.45.

PORTSMOUTH, St. Thomas-street, 6.45, Rev. T. BOND.

PRESTON, Unitarian Chapel, Church-street, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. C. TRAVERS.

SCARBOROUGH, Westborough, 10.45 and 6.30, Rev. JOSEPH WAIN.

SEVENOAKS, Bessell's Green, The Old Meeting House, 11, Rev. J. F. PARMITER.

SHEFFIELD, Upper Chapel, 11, Rev. C. J. STREET; 3, Service of Song; 6.30, United Service, Rev. C. J. STREET, A. H. DOLPHIN, and J. W. COCK, Sunday School Centenary.

SIDMOUTH, Old Meeting, High-street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. WILLIAM AGAR.

SOUTHPORT, Portland-street Church, 11 and 6.30, Rev. DOUGLAS WALMSLEY, B.A.

SOUTHAMPTON, Church of the Saviour, London-road, 11 and 6.30, Rev. A. R. ANDREAE, M.A.

TORQUAY, Unity Hall, Lower Union-street, 11 and 6.30, Rev. A. E. O'CONNOR, B.D.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS, Dudley Institute, Dudley-road, Morning Service, 11; Evening Service and Lecture, 6.30, Rev. GEORGE BURNETT STALLWORTHY.

WAREHAM, South Street, 6.30, Mr. FRANK COLEMAN.

WEST KIRBY, Meeting Room, Grange-road 11 and 6.30, Rev. H. W. HAWKES.

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The Church of the Liberal Faith, Logenhaus, Welckerstrasse, 11, Rev. GARDNER PRESTON.

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Free Protestant (Unitarian) Church, Hout-street, 6.45, Rev. RAMSDEN BALMFORTH.

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Unitarian Church, Eagles Hall, 1319, Government-street. Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

WATCH NIGHT SERVICE, Dec. 31.
 Islington Unity Church, Upper Street, 11.15 p.m., Rev. Dr. TUDOR JONES.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

Rev. JOSEPH POLLARD, 16, Forres-gardens, Golders-green.

MARRIAGE.

LEWIS—BAIRD.—On December 21, at the Parish Church of St. Nicholas, Great Yarmouth, by the Vicar, the Rev. Canon Willink, Alfred Hartley Lewis, elder son of Arthur Lewis, and grandson of the late Rev. Charles Wicksteed, to Harriet, second daughter of James Baird, of Great Yarmouth.

DEATHS.

KENWARD.—On December 23, at his residence, 87, London-road, St. Leonards-on-Sea, Thomas William Kenward, aged 83. No flowers, by request.

ROOKE.—On December 24, at Weybridge, Anne Matilda, widow of Peter Henry Rooker, and daughter of the late John Sutton Nettlefold, of Highgate, in her 87th year. Funeral at St. James' Church, Weybridge, on Thursday, December 29, at 2.15 p.m. No flowers, by request.

WILLIAMS.—On December 27, at his residence, "Well Close Terrace," aged 74, the Rev. Francis Hadyn Williams, for 23 years Minister of Flowergate Old Chapel, Whitley.

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Advertisements should arrive not later than Twelve o'clock on THURSDAY to appear the same week.

THE INQUIRER.

A Journal of Liberal Religion, Literature, and Social Progress.

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* * *All letters and manuscripts for the Editor should be sent to 23, Cannon-place, Hampstead, N.W.*

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

CHRISTMAS Day in London was a day of welcome brightness after weeks of rain, and the extra holiday has been such a boon to many tired people that we hope it may become an annual institution. In 1911, when Christmas Day will be on Monday, there will again be three days' holiday without the need of a special proclamation. This will help to fix the habit and make it hard to return to the old system.

BUT the Christmas sunshine was overcast by clouds of sorrow and disaster. The funeral of the murdered policemen in St. Paul's was at once an act of public sympathy with the bereaved, an expression of horror at the crime, and a tribute to the fine body of men upon whom we depend for the order of our streets and the safety of our homes. The mining accident in Lancashire and the wreck of the Midland express followed each other in quick succession, and it must have been a very callous heart that did not hear the sound of wailing mingling with the Christmas song or see shadowed forms sitting at the feast.

THE beautiful carol singing in many churches this Christmas has given rise to some well-deserved comments upon the rare quality of English church music. Perhaps it is at the present time the most distinctive way in which we use art to minister to religion. We do not paint great pictures. We have lost, if we ever possessed it, the rhythm of stately movement in religious processions. But the music of the Nativity and the Passion is never so

jubilant or pathetic as when rendered by an English choir. And like all perfect art, it does not interfere with the deep simplicity of the religious impression.

IN the appointment of the Bishop of Winchester to the Deanery of Westminster the unexpected has happened. He exchanges an exhausting administrative office for one of equal dignity and greater leisure for scholarly pursuits. To a man of simple tastes, with a keen sense of the value of knowledge in the service of religion, we can well understand that a bishopric, with its state and its expensiveness, must have as many drawbacks as attractions. Dr. Ryle is one of the foremost Old Testament scholars in the Church of England, and the reputation of Westminster for breadth of view and intellectual eminence will be safe in his hands.

AT the Head Masters' Conference, which was held at Eton last week, there was an interesting discussion on the neglect of Bible teaching. On the motion of the Head Master of Harrow, the Rev. Lionel Ford, the following resolution was carried :—“That steps be taken to encourage and improve the teaching of the Bible, and this Conference recommends that a knowledge of Scripture be not omitted from or relegated to an unimportant place among the intellectual qualifications for admission to a public school.” Mr. Ford said there was the most deplorable ignorance on the part of the boys who came to the public schools of even the elementary parts of the Bible. The preparatory schools should at least give the boys a knowledge of the principal narratives and stories of the Bible. The Head Master of Eton spoke in similar terms of grave concern. Let them think, he said, of the loss to the youngsters who were never, either at home or at school, brought into contact with Biblical litera-

ture. If boys were merely made to read the Bible intelligently aloud that would be a great gain, though it would be nothing to what might be done by a teacher of real talent and conviction.

SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN, in his presidential address to the twenty-fifth Indian National Congress at Allahabad last Monday, made an earnest appeal for a spirit of toleration and conciliation between the rulers and the ruled. During the past twenty years, he said, the poor of India had suffered from war, pestilence, famine, and cyclone. The afflicted people had been driven well nigh to despair, but now the hope was revived that the time had come for them to close their ranks and press forward. Their watchwords must be hope, conciliation, and united effort. The sympathetic speeches of Lord Minto and Lord Hardinge justified the hopes entertained for the future, but conciliation between the different races must be the first step towards constructive work.

DEALING with the conciliation of the Hindus and the Mahomedans, the President expressed the conviction that the two great communities would eventually recognise the essential identity of their interests, and he mentioned in this connection the victory of the Indians in South Africa as illustrating what could be achieved by united efforts. The new councils offered a similar opportunity of co-operation. He outlined the programme of future work, emphasising the supreme importance of a propaganda in England. He warned the Indians not to let the new spirit of independence degenerate into race prejudice and not to forget the solid advantages derived from membership of the British Empire. It was impossible at present for India to stand alone.

THE MINING DISASTER.

THERE is no need for us to dwell upon the details of the appalling colliery disaster in Lancashire. To realise the magnitude of its sorrow and suffering is beyond the limited powers of imagination which most of us possess. Probably many of our readers have already sought relief in action, and have sent their gifts with a ready will to the central fund for the succour of the widow and the orphan. Without interfering in any way with the flow of generosity towards the £50,000 which it is hoped to raise for this purpose, we desire to call attention to the letter which we publish to-day from the Rev. J. J. WRIGHT, of Atherton. It brings to our notice the need of more private and personal gifts for immediate necessities, and the assurance that they will be distributed with the discrimination of intimate local knowledge, and the healing touch of friendship. We are confident that we need say no more.

In a private letter which we have received from Mr. WRIGHT he speaks with thankfulness and pride of two things, which have been like the bow of promise above the waters of desolating sorrow. "I have never seen," he says, "such unforgettable evidences of the divinity of our common nature as has been shown here in the magnificently quiet courage of these groups of colliers, eager at the pit-head of the exploded mine to go down and face all the dangers and horrors of rescuing their brothers, perishing or perished amid deathly gases and flaming fires." Those who know Lancashire people and their staunchness of character will not be surprised; but many of us need these painful and dramatic reminders of the invincible virtue of human nature, when danger threatens and duty is set before it in plain terms. The rough man of few words and abrupt manners has in him a heart capable of doing the utmost for his comrade, even to the risking of his own life to bring him help. We bare our heads reverently in presence of these colliers, for they have upon them the stamp of true nobility. Possibly many of them seldom darken the church door, but they are revealed suddenly as belonging to the mystical fellowship of Him who laid down his life for his friends.

The other thing is contained in this sentence: "What a uniting time it has been to us of all the Churches. Here we have been at the pit-head and in the saddened homes, our separating creeds and ceremonies forgotten, sons and daughters of the same God, disciples of the same Master, bringing to the stricken and the sorrowing all the comfort that Christian hearts could give." Once again the lesson has been learned, and the controversies which fret the surface of religion have been placed in their true perspective.

In the presence of the supreme needs of the soul, when the strong winds of the Spirit, sweeping over it in joy or sorrow, make it perfectly simple, there is a feeling of oneness deeper than any words can express. The experience passes, but it does not leave men just as they were before. Some crust of hardness has disappeared, some deeply rooted misunderstanding has been loosened, some preference for the things which make for peace is alive in the heart, and the knowledge that for a few moments, in face of a crushing need, Christian charity spurned all exclusiveness, goes with them as an ineffaceable memory all their days. There is here no explanation of disaster, but there is healing for our sorest wounds in the knowledge that love is stronger than death, and that man's extremity is always God's opportunity.

LIFE, RELIGION & AFFAIRS.

"TIME, LIKE AN EVER-ROLLING STREAM."

A NEW YEAR'S EVE MEDITATION.

It is curious to notice how the Early-Christian idea of the brevity of the life of the earth, and our modern idea of its indefinite length seem to work out a similarity of result. Both alike threaten the vitality of the passing moment.

In fevered dreams of what was about to happen, in agitated anticipations of the second coming, and of a new heaven and a new earth, some of the primitive Christians neglected their own business and stood gaping at the vacant skies for the arrival of their Lord. The transiency of the present order, the imminence of the end of the world, robbed the instant of its significance, and weakened the normal incentive to strenuous living. The second letter to the Thessalonians rebukes this enervating attitude, and exhorts the brethren "that with quietness they work and eat their own bread."

But in the case of us moderns one might suppose the secular inducements to be overwhelmingly strong. Yet, in another way, it is the far distance, not the immediate nearness that influences our spirit. As we meditate pensively on the passing years we are carried away from reflections on the brevity of our individual life to roam at large over the Immensities and the Eternities. The whole scale of Space and Time has been indefinitely magnified. We have no sense of an impending miraculous catastrophe to pre-shorten the perspective of time. We look forward through an endless vista and fail to fix any limits to the future. The past in like manner recedes immeasurably far. We do not now place opposite the first words of Genesis, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," a date almost recent as yesterday, 4,004 B.C. Before and after we see a ceaseless flux hurrying in both directions to the dizzy distance. The endless everlasting stream of time flows on

to the dim and fading horizon. We live our little life as on a ship in mid-ocean. Look in whatever direction we may, we see no shore, only the heaving waves rising and falling in bewildering confusion.

And our conception of Space, like that of Time, is correspondingly expanded. We no longer look up to a solid firmament with a few convenient lamps swinging aloft to light up the darkness of our night. We see instead a vast and voiceless Abyss strewn with the whirling wreckage of a myriad suns and systems. Plunged into these infinities we feel the awe which seems all but to annihilate this little habitation of men. Our earth "spins like a fretful midge," and our civilisations and empires become already one with Nineveh and Tyre.

For the first Christians it was the brevity of earthly time and the certainty of heaven, their next-and other-worldliness, that blighted with excess of light the meaning of the moment. But for us it is the vastness of our earthly perspective, and our vagueness as to the hereafter—our enormous this-worldliness—which blanches our existence into vanity and shatters into nothingness the bubble of our life.

Doubtless it is a wholesome humbling of pride to submit ourselves to this mood of melancholy, and in the midst of imperial boasting to remember our trivial pettiness. We may all recall the story of how Socrates once took a young man who bragged about the extent of his landed estates, to see a collection of maps in one of the public buildings of Athens. The philosopher showed his vain companion a map of the whole world, so far as it was then believed to be known. "Now," said Socrates in his provocative way, "please point out to me your possessions." "Impossible!" exclaimed the humiliated youth, "where Attica itself only appears as a small spot." But though Attica was only the size of a handsome ducal domain, we may learn from it another lesson than the salutary one thus taught by Socrates. What really matters is the greatness of its intellectual distinction which can never be indicated on a map; what we feel about it now is the imperishable nobility of its influence on the mind of mankind. Similarly the ministry of Jesus occupied in time but a few months, but its brevity did not destroy but rather contribute to the divine grandeur of its spiritual significance.

And in like manner the infinities of space which reduce our earth to such petty proportions, the everlastingness of time which makes the moment so momentarily unmomentous, can in no way crush out of the human soul the conviction that it is designed for a destiny diviner than the perishable pomp of those physical worlds that flame for an instant in the purple bowl of night.

It is this sense of a greatness incommensurable with any bigness, however big; it is this sense of a spiritual conservation of values, of an immortality of consciousness, incommensurable with any mere temporal longevity, that alone can fill each golden minute to the brim, and crowd it with the glory of eternal issues.

Time passes with ceaseless flow, and man moves along its frail succession, yet as a being never wholly out of union with a

Power not of Time but of Eternity. We see a tram-car driven through our streets slipping an extended arm along the narrow wire overhead and drawing its energies from the power-house of the earthly city. So we move along this thin wire of Time's succession—so thin that we may call it wireless—but our real dynamic and vitality are not in the stream of time. Each moment of our existence is in mystical touch with Omnipotence; each point in our passage is charged with the meaning of Eternity. We drink in the Power of an endless life drawn from the Heavenly City, and like Enoch, we may walk with God.

THE BEAUTIFUL LIFE.

For hundreds of years a strain of music, faint, far-off, elusive like a peal of silver bells heard from the dim distance, has echoed in the souls of men. It has echoed in the hearts of rich and poor, awakening into a touch of beauty, if only for a moment, souls sunk in a lethargy of poverty or an impoverishment of wealth. Year after year it has struck across the fret of life, calling a sudden gleam into hopeless eyes and an impulse of kindness where little kindness dwelt. It is the music of the beautiful life, sounding from a village among the Galilean hills. Year after year the thought of that village comes like a leafy shelter on the dusty highway, a glimpse of palms and fountains amid the expanses of desert. And it is a vision within that vision, of a humble home, where a boy awakes every morning to the wonder of the dawn; where, amid a cloud of sweet shavings, he watches his father at his bench, and presently works there himself; where he holds his mother's hand among chattering women at the fountain, while the tender twilight enfolds the hills; where, one of the crowd of village boys, he follows the reader of the synagogue and repeats never-to-be-forgotten words that shall soon thrill and burn through his soul. It is a vision of a boy with reticent hopes and dreams of a city of God set on the heights, and of a glorious temple symbol of the passionate hopes of his people, which he will enter when he becomes a man. Now he marks God's finger in that larger temple where the lilies grow, and the seed springs, and the seasons wax and wane, and the birds live their mysterious lives between heaven and earth. Now it is a vision of a youth, reading in the great book of human life; coming into touch with death as one here and there drops out of the familiar village life into the unknown, while the women wail and beat their breasts, and the men put ashes on their heads; coming very near to the mystery when the father of his love stands no longer among the shavings at the bench. It is a vision of growing knowledge of the life hidden behind faces lined by toil and care as they pass his workshop door, of the undertones in the voices that reach him from the evening groups gathered by the thresholds. Now it is a vision of young manhood, full of a strange, sweet wisdom in the real values of life, thinking, thinking, while the homely tools are plied at the old bench. . . .

And then it is a vision of a going forth to minister unto men and women; of three wonderful years which have dominated the centuries; of an impassioned and pitiful face bent towards the sad, the helpless, the diseased; a dim and lonely vision of one among the oleanders beside the lake, in the struggling fishing hamlet, on the dusty roadways, in the boat pushed off a little way from the shore; a fragmentary echo of many words spoken at even, when the sun was set, to gatherings of poor men hushed into a yearning silence. There is a passing glimpse of a sunny Sabbath morning among the yellowing wheat; and another of the glad leap of children to outstretched arms. A young, gracious life, drawing men who are often dull and uncomprehending, but always glad and unafraid at the touch of his hand; a life of the people and among the people, of a poor man among poor men. A vision of one whose hands are hardened by toil; whose raiment is not the rich robes of the painters, but poor and patched; who has always known and still knows the pinch of want; who feels the pricelessness of the widow's mite; of one who has been heavy-laden and has longed for rest, and speaks simply of the joys of home-life—of bridal, and faithfulness between servant and lord, of beauty and dignity of personal service, of children's games. . . . Just a broken record, a blurred picture, a few hurried notes made by a few wistful men who listened day by day and loved exceedingly. And yet enough to make the sound of Christmas the most golden sound now of all the years; through all the materialism of its celebrations sounding that note of fellowship, which he struck who "measured all men by their love." It brings into colourless lives a touch of drama and pageantry, and here and there it turns a face heavenward which has caught a murmur of the heavenly song.

We smile, perhaps, at the manner in which this manifests itself. Yet it was, so it seems, just the happiness found in common things that the Beautiful Life was fain to share. The artisan of Galilee who sat at poor men's feasts could look with no scornful spirit on the humble hearth made richer for Christmas. No scorn could he have for that, only for the dead imagination, the dull indulgence which, wearying of superfluity, exclaims in satiety against the materialism of those who have enough for their pathetic need—because it is Christmas. So, year by year, the sweetness of the music of the Beautiful Life steals through the world, gladdening tired souls and bodies. Still it sweetly whispers amid the hurly-burly of armed camps, of an ideal glimpsed at least to-day—"Peace on earth, goodwill among men." Men still pause, when the Christmas bells ring out, to cast a thought at one who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. The message of the Galilean, so human and so divine, sounds down the yearning centuries and pleads with us once more for mercy, for pity, for brotherhood, for love. So it comes to pass that at Christmas we expect the best of men, not the worst, and if ever we think and feel kindly we think and feel kindly now. We hush the dis-

cordant noises, and hear almost, if not quite, the angels sing. And, whatever our creeds or our non-beliefs, Christmas stands for this: that once, long ago, there was lived, simply and humanly, the Beautiful Life of one who knew the meaning of Love and passed it on to the world; that the sweetness of that life breathes through the world still; that it still has power to transfigure the souls of men; and that its message growing clearer and plainer speaks more to our ears, it may be, than to the humble company who walked with him and broke bread with him in those dim years of long ago. He draws us still, this man with God and man in his heart. We do not turn from him, nor forget him. Christmas reminds us once more that the loveliest music of humanity is the music of his life.

THE USE OF HISTORY.

From our childhood we all love stories; and at a very early age we begin to ask if the story told us is true. For if we inquire closely into that which makes the living interest of every tale—even of "Gulliver's Travels" or "Robinson Crusoe"—we shall find that it lies either in the gratification of curiosity or in the flattering of our self-esteem by deputy. To satisfy either the desire for knowledge or the spirit of self-love, it is essential that the story be true; and the record of true happenings in their relation to mankind is, in the widest sense, history. The word is too generally taken to apply merely to political matters, the teaching of the schoolroom being chiefly to blame for this narrowing of the field. The old chroniclers took a wider view, and were never adverse to recording any interesting event quite apart from any connection with affairs of State. That is to say, they appreciated the force of curiosity; and so recorded earthquake and pestilence, treasure-trove and monstrous fish, with the same care that they bestowed on the wars of princes and the decrees of senates.

Early written history, therefore, is invariably of a romantic order, dealing in marvels and the exploits of heroes. And were we content to read it for our pleasure alone, we should desire nothing better than the legendary chronicles. They abound in matter that tickles the fancy, and in the boldness of their hero-worship there is a very real humanity. Horatius on the bridge is no less of a man than Sir Robert Walpole, and a great deal more respectable. But if Horatius be a myth, we cannot cite him as an example of our own nobility, and so, forsaking him with reluctance, we must fall back on facts to secure our self-esteem.

What then is the use and meaning of history? The question is treated at large by Dr. Max Nordau in his recent work "The Interpretation of History."* Originating in the primitive desires mentioned above, its earliest use was to support the claims of the hero's successors to a share in the respect paid to him, and accordingly it was fostered and encouraged by the king and the priest, as we see in

* The Interpretation of History. By Max Nordau. Rebman & Co.

the Egyptian wall-paintings and hieroglyphic inscriptions. But more powerful and far-reaching than the desire for reflected glory is the desire for knowledge, and even stronger than curiosity regarding the past is that which would fathom the future. To break away from legend and ascertain the true facts—to learn as exactly as possible what has been, and by some undefined process to deduce therefrom what will be—this task was claimed by the historian at a later stage. But this theory of history assumes too much. The only facts regarding the future that can safely be predicted from the study of the past are so wide and general that they carry little value as a contribution to knowledge, and the prophet-historian is seen to be no better diviner than Master Peter's wonderful ape, who could tell Don Quixote something about the present and a little about the past, but let the future alone. "Every moment in history," says Dr. Nordau, "is the result of a relation between the forces in operation and the general conditions under which they operate, and the combination can never be either repeated or modified."

It would, therefore, seem to be impossible to arrive at any theory of life by means of the study of history. Of course, the attempt has been made; but it breaks down because history deals with the purposeful action of individuals, while it cannot be shown that humanity as a whole has any purposes whatever. It has often been said that by the study of history are revealed the purposes of God; but though this claim has been made in all reverence, it surely is nothing but another manifestation of the old spirit of self-esteem. Granted that of this planet's inhabitants man is the most highly intelligent, what right has he to assume that he is his Maker's peculiar and special care? Had God no purposes before man appeared on the earth? or will He have none when man has disappeared? Yet this plea for the value of history—record of a newly-risen and infinitesimal part of creation—is seriously put forward by those who hail the Creator as Infinite and Eternal.

History, Dr. Nordau holds, has no claim to rank as a science. It affords a barren knowledge of isolated facts subjectively presented, from which it is impossible to draw deductions of any value concerning the development of mankind, still less the reasons for his existence. In the ascending scale of intelligence three questions present themselves concerning the life of man: What is it? How comes it so? and Why is it so? The first is the easiest to answer, and physiological and biological science have solved it. The last and most interesting may never be solved; we can only surmise, and our religions represent our answers. The question as to how man has come to be what he is, is susceptible of scientific treatment, but not by means of the study of history. It is only of recent years that man has been studied objectively; the science of sociology is still in its youth, and though it is destined to be the greatest of the human sciences, as it comprises all the others, it must be approached the more cautiously on that account. It cannot be doubted, however, that it will give us ultimately a clear and well-regulated know-

ledge of the growth of mankind from its origin to its final development; and in this connection history serves a subsidiary purpose. The relationship of history to sociology may be likened to that existing between arithmetic and algebra; in the former we see the concrete examples, while the latter lays down the general rules. And apart from its literary value—no mean one in itself—the real use of history lies in its power of affording illustration to sociology, the general science of Mankind.

TOLSTOY'S FLIGHT.

THE following letter by Tolstoy, written thirteen years ago, was published in *The Times* on Monday. It will be seen that it gives an interesting explanation of the motive for his flight. Outside the letter was written, "Unless I leave directions to the contrary, this letter is to be handed to S.A. after my death," S.A. being Countess Sofia (Sonia) Andreevna Tolstoy:—

DEAR SONIA,—Long have I been tormented by the discord between my life and my beliefs. To compel you all to change your life, the habits to which I myself had accustomed you, I could not; and to leave you ere this I also could not, believing that I would deprive the children while they were little of that small influence which I could have over them, and would grieve you; on the other hand, to continue to live as I have lived these sixteen years, struggling and irritating you or falling myself under those influences and temptations to which I had become accustomed and by which I am surrounded, I also cannot, and I have now decided to do what I have long wished to do—go away, because, first, for me, in my advancing years, this life becomes more and more burdensome and I long more and more for solitude; and, secondly, because the children have grown up, my influence is not needed, and you all have livelier interests which will render my absence little noticeable.

The chief thing is that just as the Hindus, nearing 60, retire into the woods, and as old religious men seek to devote their last years to God and not to jokes, puns, gossip, or tennis, so for me, entering my 70th year, the all soul-absorbing desire is for tranquillity, for solitude, and, if not for entire harmony, at least not for crying discord between my life and my beliefs and conscience.

If I did this openly, there would be entreaties, pleadings, criticisms, quarrels, and I might weaken, perhaps, and not fulfil my decision—yet it must be fulfilled. And so, pray forgive me if my act causes you pain, and, above all, in your soul, Sonia, leave me free to go, and do not repine or condemn me.

That I should have gone away from you does not mean that I am displeased with you. I know that you could not—literally could not—and cannot see and feel as I do, and, therefore, could not and cannot change your life and sacrifice yourself for something which you do not recognise. And, therefore I do not blame you, but on the contrary recall with love and gratitude the long 35 years of our life, especially the first half of this period, when

you, with the maternal devotion of your nature, so firmly and energetically bore that which you considered to be your duty. You have given me and the world what you could give. You have given great motherly love and devotion, and you cannot but be prized for that. But during the last period of our life—the last 15 years—we have drifted asunder. I cannot think that I am to blame, because I know that I have changed, not for myself nor for other people's sake, but because I could not otherwise. Neither can I blame you that you did not follow me, but thank and lovingly remember and shall continue to remember you for what you gave me.

Good-bye, dear Sonia,

Your loving LEO TOLSTOY.

June 8-21, 1897.

THE SOUL'S REBUKE.

A MAN thought he saw his naked soul before God's tribunal. And the Soul said with confidence, "Thou art God, the God with Whom I have dwelt; the God I have absorbed myself in. In Thy eternity have I become a part; in Thy infinity has my life been united."

There was silence. Again the Soul spoke.

"Have I not gone to Thine Altar, have I not prostrated myself before Thee. Have I not lost myself in the abyss of Thy love?"

There was silence.

The Soul was hurt in its self-belief, and protested—

"Have I not said 'I am nothing'? Have I not said I will ever meditate upon Thy holy name? I will be one with Thee. Hast Thou no care for the Soul who would fain become one with Thee?"

Then, from the awful presence of God, the form of a Man became visible. In His wonderful beauty Love seemed incarnate, Love that in its sorrow for suffering looked beyond the mystery of pain to its redemption.

The Soul began to shiver. The warmth of Love had in it no answering glow.

The man heard the Christ speak; His words were stern:

"You were ever absorbed in yourself, not in God. You looked inward, therefore you saw only yourself. Did the heavenly presence radiate from you, giving God's light to the world? Were men purer in your company? Did ribald talk cease? Did unselfish desire govern their thoughts?"

There was no answer.

Then the Christ spoke again.

"You turned your eyes from your brother man, as if he were too vile to look on. You forgot that God has stooped to man. Is it for you to scorn the life with which God has united Himself? You have knelt before the Altar, worshipping the unseen Christ. You left Christ's presence cold and self-absorbed. Go back to earth. Learn to look down. Learn that light illumines the service of Love, that the darkness of self is with the life that only looks within."

And the Soul crept back abashed to its earthly tenement.

FLORENCE NEVILL.

THE CREED OF A MODERN MYSTIC.

MRS. WILLIAM SHARP has endeavoured in the fascinating "Life" of her husband, which was published a short time ago, to give an explanation of the complex psychological problem presented by the dual personality of William Sharp and "Fiona Macleod." The loving intuition and perfect sympathy which she brought to the task have enabled her to enlighten us considerably in regard to this curious development of genius, and if the mystery is only deepened by every attempt to elucidate it, the reason is to be found, not in the biographer's lack of understanding, but in our necessarily imperfect knowledge of the laws which govern the soul's life.

The following "Credo" was written inside a little book of old wood-cut illustrations, reproduced and printed on Iona, which William Sharp gave to his wife for a Christmas card in 1894:—

"The Universe is eternally, omnipresently, and continuously filled with the breath of God.

"Every breath of God creates a new convulsion in the brain of Nature; and with every moment of change in the brain of Nature, new loveliness is wrought upon the earth.

"Every breath of God creates a new convulsion in the brain of the Human Spirit, and with every moment of change in the brain of the Human Spirit, new hopes, aspirations, dreams, are wrought within the Soul of the Living.

"And there is no Evil anywhere in the Light of this creative Breath; but only, everywhere, a redeeming from Evil, a winning towards Good."

QUESTIONS AT ISSUE.

[Under this heading writers discuss freely from their own point of view living problems of Religion, Ethics, and Social Reform, but the Editor does not assume responsibility for the opinions expressed.]

"THE CHRIST-MYTH."

In the course of my visits to localities in different parts of the country as travelling secretary of the Liberal-Christian League, many questions have been put to me at the public meetings I have addressed on the subject of the value and meaning of Jesus in the light of historic criticism. In the minds of not a few there is considerable uncertainty as to the historic reality of Jesus, especially in view of the recently published books dealing with the place of Jesus in history and the mythical interpretation of the gospel records. This perplexity is not to be wondered at. But how is it to be removed? That is another and by no means an easy question to answer. For what will convince one may not convince another. When equally competent writers pronounce different judgments and give widely diverse interpretations of the gospel narratives, and when far-seeing critics express emphatically their divergent opinions upon any special work on the subject—e.g., Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter

and Dr. K. C. Anderson on "The Christ-Myth" by Prof. Drews—who is to decide between them? One must form some kind of an independent judgment after giving attention to the evidence presented. Then let the answer to any question be a personal opinion. Dogmatism is excluded. The last word, the final solution of this Jesus problem has not yet been given and is not at all likely to be for a long time to come.

When all has been said by the critical historians there still remains, as before, the gospel records which give the portrait of a real and not a mythical person. At any rate, that is the general belief according to my knowledge of liberal thinkers. Even if one admits that the portrait is an idealised one, that the gospels contain legendary elements, and that the Jesus which the early Church presented to the world is more than a son of man, he is not, therefore, other than or less than a real man, that is to say, a different nature or kind of man. May not the idealisation be a powerful testimony to the remarkable impression which Jesus made upon his followers? It does not necessarily involve the mythical explanation. At least, judging from the experience of inquirers I have had, I believe that the general view of those interested in the subject is that the idealised picture of Jesus represents a real character. That view will take a lot of dissolving.

It must also be said that "the simple fact" of Jesus is by no means the obvious thing which some try to make out. Even the "nine foundation sayings," which Schmiedel gives as an irreducible minimum, do not convince me that they are in any sense more fundamental than others which might be quoted. Schmiedel himself, it will be remembered, assures us that "we may accept as credible everything that harmonises with the idea of Jesus which has been derived from what is called the 'foundation-pillars,' and is not otherwise open to fatal objection." That may be regarded as a great concession to make, but it rather puts away than resolves the doubt. It is impossible to say in all cases which are and which are not the actual words of Jesus. The compilers evidently never desired to give merely notes of the teaching of Jesus. The whole atmosphere of love, faith, remembrance and hope prevented anything so unattractive and unspiritual. As Dr. Moffatt remarks, "each document we now discover contains a standpoint as well as a subject."

That fact suggests that Jesus has a real significance in the human, personal, spiritual and symbolic sense. The New Testament, as a whole, is a symbol of the spirit, the outward form of the faith of the Early Christians. The gospels appeal to the imagination, and to the best within human nature, because the imagination and the best within the soul inspired their composition. There is no need, as an old theology suggests, to discredit or to belittle human nature in order to find a reason for the presence of Jesus; for he was in the world because the world made his coming inevitable. What, therefore, we know about him is not of any greater importance than what we determine he

shall be for life and its ideals. Do we, then, re-create Jesus after our own image? Unquestionably. What else can we do? The same fact is differently viewed and variously interpreted. To avail for life the impression made by Jesus must be special to the individual, must be the product of the individual faith, love and imagination, must be a symbol of the divine within, or of the unfolding self with its manifold powers.

In that sense, Jesus has value for modern life. All critical questions apart, this value needs to be emphasised as a real experience. The truth of the gospels is this very deep and permanent impression which is enshrined in them. Whoever was responsible for this impression, it is there and it is here too. For this going back to Jesus is a process of mind. We get back within ourselves, to the fact of self-consciousness, and to the Christ ideal we cherish. Maeterlinck has well said:—"There is a thing that is loftier still than to love our neighbour as we love ourselves; it is to love ourselves in our neighbour." How true that is with regard to Jesus and his value for us! To see ourselves in him, to see him as our own ideal, the projective and image of what is best within, and to organise life for the fuller manifestation of the divine, is veritably a new coming of the Christ, the eternal spirit of love, goodwill and hope.

The modern interest in the reality of Jesus is due in part to the social awakening. This has led to a deeper study of his social teaching. The "democratic" Jesus more truly suggests what he was than does an ecclesiastical view. To a very large extent the common people have grown tired of the conventional Christ used so frequently and intolerantly in support of Church theological dogmas. The better and spiritual mind of the people has never been satisfied with a dogmatic interpretation of Jesus and his work. The agonised Christ was a distortion of the real fact. The Christ of joy, of life, of health, of self-giving, of democratic fellowship and goodwill is nearer the truth. The gospel records make it clear that Jesus proclaimed a kingdom of love, of justice, of brotherhood. He urged men to strive for that kingdom. He wanted men to believe that they and the Father were one even as he and the Father were one. This magnificent faith in human nature created great hopes, and to-day multitudes find the noblest inspiration and the highest sanction for their social work in his life and message. Not that Jesus laid down rules for all time. His words must be judged in the light of his own age and of his own outlook, beliefs and knowledge. We live in days very different from his. We have to face problems he never dreamed of, and, indeed, could not possibly know. To follow him does not and cannot mean a literal acceptance of his words, even supposing we are sure that any given utterances are undeniably authentic. To follow him means to act in the same spirit, in the same faith for the same kingdom of God, and to do a work in our own age similar to the work he did in his. To endeavour to be as socially valuable—that is a following

of Jesus. Like all true and courageous prophets, he had a message first and foremost for his own times, yet with a meaning for the days to come. He was the sower who went forth to sow. Yet the foundation of religion is not any gospel which he proclaimed, but the fact of an indwelling spirit which inspired him to give his life unto the uttermost.

Therefore the sanction for social regeneration is to be found, not in any past record, but in the educated mind and Christ-consciousness within the community. There is being developed a new sensitiveness to injustice, disease, suffering and need. The Christ-spirit must be organised to overcome all anti-Christ powers and interests. The people must co-operate for their own salvation and be the makers of their own destiny. The powers working for salvation, *i.e.*, health, holiness, wholeness and life, is within—the dynamic of the spirit we name God. The gospels reveal one who manifested so wonderfully the power of the Spirit and the beauty of human nature. The Son of Man came eating and drinking. So every true son of man will recognise the meaning of body, of the material, and will see that one fully represents the other and in a real sense *is* the other. Jesus knew the significance of both form and spirit, and that is another reason why his value for modern life is unquestionably great and permanent.

F. R. SWAN.

CORRESPONDENCE.

[The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by correspondents. LETTERS CANNOT BE INSERTED WITHOUT THE WRITER'S NAME, and all private information should be accompanied by the name and address of the senders.]

THE LANCASHIRE COLLIERY DISASTER.

AN APPEAL FOR HELP.

SIR,—I am sure you will allow me through your pages to thank the many friends near and far who, through me, have sent such kindly messages of sympathy to all here in Atherton who have been bereaved and especially to those of our own congregation, by the appalling Pit Disaster in which 333 men have perished. The women and children (1,200 of them) are left to be comforted and provided for, and you will let me thank friends who have already sent monetary help. Just now, when the wages have suddenly ceased by the death of the breadwinner, is the time when special assistance in the stricken homes is most needed until the bigger funds are raised and regular relief comes into operation. If any others in our churches wish to help a little in this way, we of Chowbent Chapel will see whatever is sent duly distributed where needed, and, of course, irrespective of creed, for calamity has no creed.—Yours, &c.,

J. J. WRIGHT.

Woodleigh, Leigh, Lancs.

[As we state elsewhere we are anxious to do everything in our power to further

Mr. Wright's appeal. We learn that in his own congregation there have been only two deaths; but in Atherton itself there have been 50 to 60 deaths distributed over 45 to 50 homes. Many of these families are very poor and belong to no church. Mr. Wright and his helpers are in a position to give immediate assistance with care and discrimination where it is most needed, if they are provided with money. Later on the large public funds will be available for permanent help, but at the moment there is sore distress which can be met in this more personal way. Contributions may be sent to us or direct to the Rev. J. J. Wright, at the above address, and they should be sent without any delay.—ED. OF INQUIRER.]

AN EXTENDED LECTIONARY.

SIR,—In the Liberal Christian Church of Brussels, ever since its foundation twenty-nine years ago, the custom has prevailed of supplementing Biblical readings by extracts from any valuable books, past or present, on religious, philosophical or ethical topics. For instruction and edification the advantages of the system have been found so great that the congregation would strongly object to any modification of the practice, though the choice of suitable readings greatly increases the labour of preparation for the pulpit.

To specify one of the benefits of our usage, the juxtaposition of scriptural and other ancient readings is a great help to a better understanding of the Bible. If the story of Jephthah and his daughter be placed beside the story of Idomeneus and his son; or the beginning of the second rhapsody of the Iliad in which Zeus sends a deceitful dream to Agamemnon beside the 22nd chapter of 1 Kings, in which Jahveh puts a lying spirit in the mouths of the prophets, it becomes easy for the minister to show that the two first readings belong to a period of religious and moral evolution in which the sacrifice of a human being was considered the most precious offering to the gods, and in which a religious vow, however cruel, was considered sacred and inviolable; and to refer the two other readings to a time when the gods were considered as absolute masters not bound by the laws of human morality. Thus passages of the Bible which have often been stumbling blocks become interesting and useful as ancient milestones on the road of religious development.

Spurgeon used to inveigh against what he called the *dumb* reading of the Bible, *i.e.*, a reading without comment or explanation. I believe a great deal of harm is done, especially to young people, by the dumb reading of lessons which are evidently legendary, or which belong to a far back phase of religious evolution.—Yours, &c.,

JAMES HOCART.

Brussels, December 27, 1910.

SIR,—The point of view presented so tersely in Mr. Meade-King's letter is, I think, shared by many in our churches. The subject is not altogether a new one; many years ago it was debated, and Mr. John Page-Hopps published a selection of readings, now, I think, out of print. As a relic of that time there is still a notice

in one of our chapels requesting the preacher to select his readings solely from the Bible. But knowledge has progressed considerably during the last twenty years, and we should have a clearer view of our position to-day.

I can remember many years ago a visitor to the Unitarian Church at Wandsworth expressing his appreciation of a reading from Marcus Aurelius; such literature was a revelation to him, and he asked why did the laity not hear more of it. Still later the secretary of another church told me how a reading from the "Imitation of Christ" appealed to him more than the Psalms. And quite recently, a member of one of our new congregations deplored the practice of most of the preachers who visited them restricting themselves to conventional lines in readings and sermons. "We get no breadth of modern thought," he said.

No doubt this desire for greater variety may not be unanimous, and I rather think the attitude of our churches to-day is more conservative and ritualistic. Still, if knowledge is to "grow from more to more" and new truths are to be declared, it is our churches that must do it! Is it possible for those who regard the eschatology of the Bible to be quite disproven by events, but to whom the thoughts of God and Immortality and the spiritual life stand for realities, to be satisfied always with the literature of the ancient Jews?

Even such a compilation as Mr. Connell suggests would not, I think, meet all our needs. If made up into a volume and left in the pulpit, it would, I fear, be used in a perfunctory way, as possibly are the books of prayers one finds there often. If edification as well as worship is to be a motive of our Sunday gatherings, then one reading should have a bearing upon the subject of the discourse. I can imagine no more pleasing duty for a settled minister than to mark the most suggestive passage in his week's reading, and recite it to his congregation as a lesson on Sunday. How they might come in touch with the best literature of the time in that way! Such extracts cannot properly be welded into the sermon, and though they might have to be copied out first, the labour would be amply repaid by the satisfaction given. If a personal reference may be pardoned, I may mention that though as a supply I am careful never to transgress the usage of a church when visiting, yet in places where I am known I have recently drawn from such diverse sources as "The Talmud," "The Persian Mysteries," "Baháism," J. Freeman Clarke, and Sir Oliver Lodge.

Nothing advanced here is intended to disparage the use of the Bible. Apart from the spiritual truths enshrined therein, there is a majestic rhythm in the language that it is difficult to equal, and impossible to surpass, but a universal faith must lay claim to the best thoughts of the race wherever and whenever uttered.

Yours, &c.,

E. CAPLETON.

113, Highbury New Park, N., Dec. 27.

SIR,—I have always understood that an extended lectionary was permitted in our churches, and that its extent was the

whole range of human literature. It is most desirable that this should be so, as it enables a preacher to utilise the lessons so as to lay before his hearers the facts on which he wishes to preach, and he then has the whole sermon time for commenting on them. If he is bound down to certain lessons, or even restricted to the use of the Bible, then, unless he is preaching upon a Biblical subject, he has merely the half hour of sermon time in which to state his facts and add his comments upon them. He is thus decidedly hampered in the work of instructing the congregation. I have had but slight experience in conducting services, and have then often preached on Biblical subjects; but in dealing with other subjects I have several times been asked for the loan of books from which lessons have been read, or for references to the passages which were selected. Surely one duty of a minister is to select the most instructive lessons which can be found anywhere and present them to those to whom he ministers, and discourse upon them.—Yours, &c.,

A. D. TYSSEN.

59, Priory-road,
West Hampstead, N.W.
December 26, 1910.

SIR,—It is always useful to discuss the question of the use, or non-use, of other books than the Bible for congregational service as "lessons." Fortunately, our Unitarian congregations are all perfectly free to settle the question between themselves and their ministers, and differences will always occur on the point, which is a matter of taste. But some of your correspondents seem to suggest the compilation of a lectionary, presumably printed and published. Our ministers may, and do, have their shortcomings, but lack of education and knowledge of good writers can seldom be laid to their charge, and they can surely be trusted to select readings suitable for the occasion.

As Dr. Coupland says, many parts of the Bible are unsuitable, but I never heard an unsuitable part read in a Unitarian chapel, and am quite content to let our ministers select for themselves. Our laymen are quite capable of criticising a minister who reads an unsuitable lesson!—Yours, &c.,

ALFRED WILSON.

Melrose, 2, Ella-road,
Crouch Hill, N.
December 24, 1910.

THE motto card of the Sunday School Association for 1911 has a picture in colours of the Christian pilgrim painfully making his way over rough rocks amid swirling water, by Miss Alice Odgers, with the first verse of Cardinal Newman's well-known hymn, "Lead, kindly Light," at the bottom. On the back of the card a list of Bible readings for the year is given. These readings, which may be taken in connection with a series of Lessons on the Books of the Bible, follow a scheme outlined by the Rev. Brooke Herford, D.D., in the *Sunday School Helper*, 1893.

BOOKS AND REVIEWS.

BOOKS OF ALL SORTS AND SIZES.

It is one of the disadvantages of a short and crowded publishing season that many new books and fresh editions are almost elbowed out of notice by tall and stately rivals. Bookseller and reviewer alike find the task of selection a very difficult one, and failure to win prominence in the shop window or the best columns of the newspaper is no condemnation of an author's merits. To many the tribute of praise is due before the year runs its course, and the acknowledgment is none the less sincere because it is compressed into a few lines.

We have received from Messrs. T. & T. Clark two more volumes of their interesting series of modern sermons, which bears the suggestive title "The Scholar as Preacher" (price 4s. 6d. net each volume). CHRIST AND CHRIST'S RELIGION, by the Rev. F. Homes Dudden, D.D., of Lincoln College, Oxford, consists of seventeen sermons, eight of which have been published before in the *Guardian* and the *Church Times*. They bear the marks of wide reading and thoughtfulness, which will help their spiritual appeal among readers who may differ widely in their ecclesiastical allegiance. THE PROGRESS OF REVELATION, by the Rev. G. A. Cooke, D.D., the Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford, consists of a series of sermons chiefly on the Old Testament. As befits the successor of Canon Cheyne, he uses the results of literary and historical criticism, and the discoveries in archaeology and comparative religion in his pulpit teaching, but he does so indirectly, recognising that "the pulpit is not the place for controversial discussions, or for heedless adventures into regions which have not been thoroughly explored." It is a remarkable sign of the rapid change which has taken place in religious thought, that in a University sermon Dr. Cooke assumes that the story of Abram belongs to the sphere of legend, and that the narratives which tell us about Moses were written five hundred or six hundred years after his time.

TEACHERS AND PREACHERS, by J. G. Simpson, D.D. (London: Edward Arnold, 5s. net), may be commended heartily to the attention of all who take an interest in the art of preaching and the mission of the preacher. It deals chiefly with the classical English preachers, and reflects on almost every page the writer's strong preferences and enthusiasms. It concludes with an essay on the Needs of the Modern Pulpit, in which Canon Simpson pleads for conviction and boldness of utterance, and at the same time warns the preacher to recognise frankly the human limitations of his discourse. "The real fallacy lies in a misconception of the preacher's office, which invests him with a false sacerdotalism. . . . He is addressing, and he ought to know that he is addressing, the critical conscience of his audience, and no one should be more ready than he to submit himself to their conscientious criticism."

Dr. J. Hamlyn Hill's translation of the Diatessaron of Tatian—THE EARLIEST

LIFE OF CHRIST—has been issued in an abridged edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 3s. net). English students of the New Testament, especially those who have studied the parallel narratives with some care, will find it very interesting to examine this earliest attempt at a harmony of the Gospels. The English translation has been made from the edition of the Arabic version, known as the Borgian MS., which was published by Agostino Ciasca in 1888. In a short introduction, Dr. Hill gives an outline of Tatian's life, and describes the importance of the Diatessaron, which achieved a wide popularity in the church in Syria, and even superseded the four Canonical Gospels in public worship.

NON-CATHOLIC DENOMINATIONS, by the Rev. Robert Hugh Benson (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 3s. 6d. net), will be interesting to Protestant readers chiefly as a revelation of the kind of information which is given to English Roman Catholics about people outside. We do not think that it is meant to be inaccurate, or even violently unsympathetic; but it is astonishing that Father Benson should not have taken more trouble to base his criticism upon adequate knowledge. The first condition of effective controversy is to understand an opponent's point of view. The naïve advice of the way in which different kinds of heretics are to be treated is sometimes rather amusing. Thus, in dealing with the New Theologian, it is recommended that there should be "a cordial recognition of his good intentions, his intellectual energy, and his fearless, if rash proclamation of his opinions even to his own personal detriment, as well as of certain true principles which he has rescued from the crumbling ethics of many of his Protestant brethren." Unitarians are consigned to a few lines in the appendix, and there is no attempt to appreciate the significance of their long struggle for liberty and their ideal of a church without dogma, their most original contribution to English Christianity. "It is their dogmatic repudiation," we are told, "of the doctrine of the Trinity, and their acceptance of Christian ethics and of Christ as the perfect Man that constitute them as a sect from the dogmatic standpoint; but beyond these points Unitarians are free to form their own opinions on other religious subjects." We fear that the superiority of pretended knowledge is inseparable from the claims of infallibility.

Two new volumes have appeared in the Cambridge Devotional Series, SELECTIONS FROM ST. AUGUSTINE'S CONFESSIONS, translated by W. Montgomery, B.D., and SAINT BERNARD, ABBOT OF CLAIRVAUX, being Selections from his Letters, Meditations, Sermons, Hymns, and other Writings, rendered into English by Horatio Grimley, M.A. (Cambridge, at the University Press: various bindings from 1s. 6d. net to 2s. 6d. net). This attempt to win fresh readers for the best devotional literature of Christendom is worthy of all praise. With them we may mention a pocket edition of the famous essay on DANTE, by Dean Church, which Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton have included among their Little Books on Religion (price 1s. net); and AN ETHICAL DIARY, selected and edited by W. Garrett Horder (London: J. M. Dent & Son; various bindings, 2s. net to 4s. net). Mr.

Horder expresses a hope that his book may prove "a directory to life in the realms that are most important." It consists of a reading for every day chosen from the ethical teachings of the Western world apart from the Bible. We have not been able to discover any principle of classification or arrangement, either Aristotelian or modern, which might help to give it distinctiveness. It is more like a miscellany chosen at random from a common-place book, than a guide towards any definite standard of conduct or ideal of character. We fear that this will injure its usefulness and limit its appeal, but it contains many treasures of wisdom and virtue for the quiet moments of life.

It is the age of anthologies. The "Oxford Book of English Verse" was followed by the "Dublin Book of Irish Verse," and now we have THE BOOK OF SCOTTISH POETRY, chosen and edited by Sir George Douglas (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 7s. 6d. net; on India paper 10s. 6d. net). The dialect poetry is rendered easy to English readers by notes at the foot of the page, and it is here that we taste the true Scottish flavour, and scent the heather. But a good deal of the poetry included in this volume belongs to the general movement of English literature, and has nothing distinctively national about it. We must not, however, grudge Scotland its pride in the sonnets of Drummond of Hawthornden, whatever alien culture may have inspired them, or in our own time in the laureate of pessimism or the strange genius of John Davidson. AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE POETRY OF THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE, chosen and arranged by W. T. Young (Cambridge: at the University Press, 2s. 6d. net), is the first of a series intended to portray different periods of English life through their literature. It will be followed by a selection of prose which will give "a picture of the Elizabethan Englishman, painted by himself, in pursuit of his business, sport or roguery." Excellent printing combined with a very reasonable price should secure a large measure of public support for this interesting scheme.

THE POEMS OF CLOUGH in the Oxford Library of Prose and Poetry (Oxford: at the University Press, 2s. 6d. net), is a very attractive volume, which even possessors of the collected edition should not overlook. It contains several poems which were printed in the small volume known as *Ambarvalia* in 1849, and omitted subsequently; also the two forms of *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*, perhaps the most successful attempt to use hexameter metre in English poetry.

Those who are familiar with Lady Gregory's Plays will give a warm welcome to THE KILKARTAN MOLIERE (Dublin: Manusel & Co., 3s. 6d. net). Three of Molière's best known plays, *The Miser*, *The Doctor in Spite of Himself*, and *The Rogueries of Scapin*, are presented here in an Anglo-Irish dress. There are few things so indigenous as humour, and Lady Gregory has made the bold experiment of translating the comedy of France into the dialect of Ireland. Mr. Yeats, in a note taken from the "Abbey Theatre Programme," February 25, 1909, explains and justifies the motive in the following words: "We selected such plays as

enabled us to use always some Irish dialect, a great deal for the servants and countrymen, but no more for well-to-do men and young lovers than one could put into the mouth of an Irish country gentleman of a few years ago. . . . In vital translation, and I believe that our translations are vital, a work of art does not go upon its travels; it is re-born in a strange land."

Books about Meredith grow apace, for we are a generation of commentators. Students who wish to quarry among his more abstruse meanings will welcome the guidance which Mr. James McKechnie affords them in MEREDITH'S ALLEGORY, THE SHAVING OF SHAGPAT (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 3s. 6d. net). That he has something bitter to give than subjective guesswork about the geography of an unmapped country is attested by a letter to the author from Meredith himself written in 1906. In this letter, referring to an earlier essay by Mr. McKechnie on the same subject, Meredith wrote: "You have done as much as could be done with the adventurous barber. An allegory is hateful to the English, and I gave it clothing to conceal its frame."

ASPECTS OF DEATH IN ART, by Dr. F. Parkes Weber (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 5s. net), is a learned and well illustrated treatise on one of the by-ways of artistic research. It is not the object of the author to discuss the familiar Dance of Death. As a fellow of the Royal Numismatic Society he confines his attention to minor works of art, such as medals, engraved gems and jewels. The work is arranged with a view to illustrating, not so much the iconography of death, as the various mental attitudes towards the idea of death, and the effect of this idea upon the living.

With this sober *memento mori*, this causerie on books on the last day of the year might fitly end, but we prefer to close with something to whet the appetite for the secrets of the future. Where is it possible to find a better combination of the new and the old, of pensive meditation and the zest of living, than in the collector, we do not mean of taxes but of curiosities? Mr. Frankfort Moore has provided just what we need in order to close the year in a mood of expectancy in THE COMMONSENSE COLLECTOR (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 10s. 6d. net). He describes the collecting and arranging of old furniture as pre-eminently the pursuit for a poor man, not only because he knows the excitement of the chase, and cannot gratify every whim by a draft on his banker, but also because it means such a handsome heirloom for his widow. The only repentance it brings is the neglect to save more money by spending it on such excellent investments. But we wonder whether Mr. Moore really buys with his eye always fixed upon the inevitable sale, or is it only a lure to catch the hesitating conscience? He gives numerous useful hints for the novice of narrow means, and photographs of nooks and corners in his house at Lewes which should stir the most sluggish to emulation. We have only one ground of serious complaint. Most of the stories which he tells of the ingenious methods used by the collector for transferring his neighbour's goods to his own use are at the expense of the

bibliophile. We quite acknowledge that as the quarry is higher the temptation is greater in the case of books than of tea-caddies or wardrobes; but if the collector of old furniture enjoys a higher reputation for honesty than some other members of the craft, it is nothing to his credit. We are quite sure that he is often very sorry for himself because he cannot put grandfather clocks and Sheraton sideboards into his pocket.

EGYPT: ANCIENT AND MODERN.*

IN no other country of antiquity can time be so easily annihilated in the imagination as in Egypt, and it is seldom that the real continuity of Egyptian life through the ages is brought home so vividly to the reader as in Maspero's latest book of travel-pictures. Its pages reveal in turn erudite scholarship, an enthusiastic spirit of research, and a sympathetic insight into the legends and beliefs of the Egyptian peasantry of the present day. The breadth of view of the accomplished director of the *Service des Antiquités* is characteristically manifested by his not disdaining to listen to the artless tales of the fellahen, and his encyclopædic knowledge enables him to identify the ancient gods masquerading in the guise of the *djinn*s and *afrits*, which, according to the villagers, still haunt the mighty temples of the Pharaohs and protect hidden treasures of fabulous value. It is one of the puzzling enigmas of history why the old Egyptian religion, which survived so many changes of dynasties for thousands of years, bringing Semites, Persians, Greeks, and Romans alternately under its spell, should have become blotted out with almost startling suddenness under the influence of Christianity. The main reason was probably not so much the depletion of the capital wealth of the country by the Romans, but the withdrawal of productive labour by the innumerable monasteries, disturbing beyond repair the economic balance of the nation. The ancient priesthood crumbled away, carrying in its train the accumulated lore of tens of centuries, together with the use and knowledge of hieroglyphs, yet the peasantry, as in many other cases, remains essentially the same, even when the aristocracy and hierarchy disappear completely.

It is extraordinary how closely the lineaments and characteristics of the gods of former days are followed by the demons and ghosts at the present time. At Karnak the monumental doorway which closes the avenue of rams, and precedes the temple of Khonsu, serves as the dwelling-place of a phantom dwarf with crooked legs and a big head with a bushy beard. He wanders about the precincts of the temple in the evening mists, and if a passing stranger should happen to laugh at his grotesque appearance the dwarf is said to leap at the throat of the unfortunate scoffer, who is strangled in return for his contumely. This apparition is the Bisu

* Egypt: Ancient Sites and Modern Scenes. By Sir Gaston Maspero. Translated by Elizabeth Lee. With seventeen illustrations. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 12s. 6d. net.

Of the old Egyptians, the dwarf who came from the Puanit, and who was ridiculed by all and sundry for his disproportionately large head with hairy cheeks and headdress of feathers, and for his shambling gait. "Here, as in many other lands, the gods are neither dead nor in exile; they are still in their hereditary domains, but they have changed their nature and have become demons. Sometimes they celebrate the ancient rites with the pomp of a former day. More than one fellah kept out late has seen a mysterious cortège passing by night from Karnak to Luxor."

In another direction, the insight which the author gives into modern methods of exploration and excavation is invaluable for showing that the old spirit of spoliation is no longer countenanced by responsible archaeologists. Indeed, an earnest attempt is made to return some of the royal mummies to their last resting-places, so that the tombs of the Egyptian kings may be viewed in future as nearly as may be in their original condition. Unfortunately it has not been possible to carry out this scheme thoroughly, owing to the want of sufficient protection against the depredations of robbers and relic-hunters. On the other hand the work of replacing fallen columns and statues in the temples of Luxor and Karnak is still in progress, and temples, as at Esneh and Edfu, are gradually being freed from the houses and hovels which have encumbered the sites of the neglected sanctuaries for centuries.

At Karnak the débris of a temple of Amenothès I., which had been destroyed and buried more than 3,000 years ago, has now been brought together, and the building is in the actual process of reconstruction. If it were not for the destruction caused by man, there does not seem any valid reason why the massive temples and pyramids should not last for ever in the exceptionally dry climate of Egypt, hardly altered since the day of their completion. The replacing of the scattered fragments of columns and architraves, and the underpinning of defective and crumbling foundations are admirable works of synthesis, which might with advantage be undertaken in many of the temples of Greece and Sicily, where buildings have suffered even more from earthquakes than at the hands of iconoclasts or lime-burners. Scarcely less valuable an undertaking is the preservation of the wall-pictures in the recesses of the tombs of the kings by the installation of the electric light. The smoky candles carried by thousands of visitors, and the dense fumes of magnesium wire were rapidly obscuring and destroying the priceless paintings; but, thanks to the resources of modern science, under Maspero's direction they will now be preserved unchanged for the benefit of posterity.

The fluent translation retains all the vivid picturesqueness of the original French, especially in the descriptions of modern life in Egypt, but the French spelling of Egyptian names might with advantage have been Anglicised, especially in such cases where the familiar designations *wady*, *sheikh*, and *shaduf* are represented respectively by *ouady*, *cheikh*, and *chaduf*.

"YOUNG DAYS."*

THIS is an old yet new friend, nor does custom stale its infinite variety. Mr. J. J. Wright is to be congratulated once more on the success of his little monthly magazine, which now appears as one of the Christmas Annuals, and, moreover, one of the most interesting of all the throng that emerges at this time of the year. There is here a happy blending of seriousness and fun, and the imaginative child is not forgotten in the bill of fare. Neither is the moral too obtrusively urged. Perhaps we are prone to point the moral rather too little nowadays—but that in parenthesis.

One of the most attractive series of articles is that on the poets, giving short biographical sketches and a few well-known extracts, which the editor suggests should be learnt off by heart, so that the rising generation may be made familiar with quotations which are current coin in the realm of educated people. Under the poetic title of "Land of Milk and Honey," there are very bright articles on different phases of country life as seen by a boy and girl. These will appeal strongly to some children. They are accompanied by reproductions of drawings by tiny nursery folk, very charming and childlike. Some of them would be deemed worthy of a place at an exhibition of the Royal Drawing Society, they are so spontaneous, so entirely free from the taint of "copy." A cottage garden, for instance, by a lady artist *ætat*. 8, is a joy for ever, a delicious bit of work.

The Temperance Crusade goes on from month to month, and will be invaluable to Band of Hope workers. For the rest, there are legends, stories, serial tales, poems, puzzles in astonishing number. We heartily commend this volume, absurdly cheap at eightpence. It will bring joy to many little hearts, and relieve many a tired mother of anxiety as to what to do with the children on Sunday afternoons or evenings.

THE WRECK OF THE GOLDEN GALLEON.
By Lucas Malet. London: Hodder & Stoughton. 5s.

LUCAS MALET has given us so many notable novels in the past that this slight story from her pen, marked by no conspicuous qualities of thought or style, will come as a surprise to her large circle of readers. The main idea running through its pages is not a strikingly original one. We seem to have met Miss Miranda Povey, of Talavera-crescent, Hoxton, so often in books of a similar kind by less-gifted writers; and even Will Evans, the "young man lodger," with his vaguely Socialistic ideas, is hardly a new creation, though we confess that the way in which he uses his nebulous theories as a cloak for wrong-doing, and compels innocent "Aunt My" to be his accessory in crime, is very ingenious. The "Golden Galleon," we may mention, is a toy of silver-gilt, made by some Dutch silversmith, which is regarded by Miss Miranda Povey as a symbol of all that is romantic and Utopian (though she would hardly have used these words herself) in the future outlook of humanity. It was given to her, in its blue plush case, by the ingratiating young Celt, who unfortunately

* London: S. School Association, 3, Essex-st., Strand. 1s. 6d. net.

had no more right to it than he had to the love and admiration of the two unsuspecting women whom he enchanted with his revolutionary jargon. How the little ship, with its cargo of dreams and hopes, foundered on the voyage to the Land of the Good Time Coming is sympathetically described by Lucas Malet, who, like all real students of life, knows that the imaginative spirit will find its way even into the shabby dwellings of "genteel" spinsters where its presence is least suspected.

EXCELLENT work is being done on behalf of defenceless animals by the Animals' Friend Society through their monthly organ, which contains many valuable hints as to the way in which readers—young ones especially—can protect and help their dumb kindred. In connection with this Society a pamphlet entitled "Sport" (a paper read before the Animals' Protection Congress at the Caxton Hall on July 9, 1909, by Mr. G. G. Greenwood, M.P.) has been published. It deals chiefly with the "blood-sports" which are still so popular in England, and reasons are given, familiar enough to thinking people, but which cannot be too often repeated, why those who take part in them cannot be exonerated from the charge of cruelty, or "the unjustifiable infliction of pain." Schopenhauer has said that "compassion for animals is intimately connected with goodness of character, and it may be confidently asserted that he who is cruel to living creatures cannot be a good man." The descriptions which Mr. Greenwood gives of the way in which the "pastime" of the sportsman is carried on prove clearly enough that the pursuit and killing of animals for "pleasure" tends to deaden the susceptibility to suffering in men who are otherwise not unkindly or thoughtless. He is particularly insistent on the necessity for fostering in young minds the sacred instinct of compassion.

THE winter number of *Bird Notes and News* (23, Queen Anne's-gate, S.W., 3d.), contains a specially prepared map, showing the exact amount of protection given to owls in every county in England and Wales. The information is useful at the present time, as in districts where owls, kestrels, and other vermin-killers are systematically killed there is naturally an undue increase of rats and mice. The number also gives in "The Story of Bird Protection, IV.," an interesting sketch of the early anti-plumage leagues which preceded the Society for the Protection of Birds; and of the protests against feathered millinery raised twenty or thirty years ago by Professor Newton, the Rev. F. O. Morris, Lady Burdett-Coutts, Lady Mount-Temple, the *Times* and *Punch*.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION:—Essex Hall Year Book, 1911. 1s. net.
MESSRS. CHATTO & WINDUS:—Royal Guide to London Charities. 1s. 6d. net.
MESSRS. CONSTABLE & Co.:—From Hausaland to Egypt: H. Karl W. Kumm. 16s. net.
MISCELLANEOUS.
Contemporary Review, January; *Cornhill Magazine*, January; *Theologisch Tydschrift*, January.

FOR THE CHILDREN.

PROTORNIS BLUMERI.

THE helmet of the man on guard shone in the rays of the moon. He watched at the gate of the Roman camp, and the army lay asleep in the vast square space, round which the high earthen bank rose. In the woods and the vales lay the German foe.

While the sentry watched and the army slept, the emperor was awake, writing in his tent. His thoughts had travelled away from the camp and the wild enemy in the German forests. His mind went back to the early years when kind friends and teachers gave him their love and care. On the parchment before him he set down his memories of all that they did for him. The eyes of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius gleamed with tenderness as he wrote :—

“Good grandsires, good parents, a good sister, good teachers.”

Good teachers.

The Swiss boy, Oswald Heer, used to get up at four in the morning to learn his language lessons. His father, the village clergyman, thought him a wonder. So did the neighbours. Oswald measured land, and calculated the area or space. He calculated the heights of Alpine hills that reared their white tops over the village. One day, as he sat in the open air, measuring and figuring, a paper blew away, and seemed to be lost for ever. However, it was brought back a few days later by a mountaineer who had found it high up; and the mountaineer said, with a smile :—

“Here is a letter which came from the sky. When I saw it, I was sure it was meant for the parsonage.”

Oswald Heer had a great friend in choirmaster Blumer, of the Canton of Glarus. The choirmaster loved insects as well as music. He had an old volume all about insects, and he kindly lent it to young Oswald. The boy was so pleased with it that he copied the book, word for word, into five manuscript books, and even copied the pictures as well; and thus he learned while he wrote and drew. Oswald kept his passion for natural history all through life till he died in 1883. Often he roamed among the rocks of Switzerland, hammer in hand, breaking stones, and searching for fossils, or signs of buried life. He brought to light the remains—embedded in stone—of an ancient bird. Proud was Oswald Heer as he gazed upon the stony relics of a creature that had winged its way through the air millions of years ago. He must give it a name. Should he call it the Bird of Oswald, or, in Greek and Latin, *Ornis Oswaldi*? No. Like the emperor in the Roman tent, he cast his thoughts far back. He remembered the friend Blumer, who helped him in his early education. He would call the old, old bird by Blumer's name, and so, to this day, the fossil bird is ticketed in the museums as *Protornis Blumeri*, or “Blumer's first bird.” It is charming to look at the fossil in the rock, and see in it a token of the gratitude of a Swiss scholar to the hand that helped him on the road of learning and science.

Another famous naturalist—an English one—was Frank Buckland. As a boy he attended Winchester school. Even at that time he had a big love for anything that flew, crawled, or ran on all-fours. He was clever at skinning badgers and rats. He could extract, or draw out, the poison fangs of adders. Bones and feathers and butterflies, and the skeletons of small beasts made a curious museum in his cupboard. At one time he thought he would study men as well as beasts, and be a doctor, or rather, a surgeon. He used to get up in the middle of the night, and hastily tie two sticks together. His schoolfellows asked him why. He said he must practise answering a call at midnight, when the surgeon was summoned to bind up a man's broken arm or leg!

However, Frank did not become a surgeon after all. He became a naturalist, and above all he studied fishes. Models of fishes made by him are still to be seen in the museum at South Kensington.

I have mentioned that he was a scholar at Winchester. A very old city is Winchester, and a very old school is Winchester school. The founder of it was William of Wykeham, and he opened the school nearly 600 years ago.

Frank Buckland had the same kind of grateful memory as the Emperor Marcus and the Swiss man of science, Oswald Heer. In the year 1865 he was writing in his journal, and he called to mind the many good lessons he had learned at Winchester. Then he set down these words—

Why should I not imitate the example of that great and illustrious man, William of Wykeham, and endeavour to do as much good as possible in my humble way? I will therefore begin next week, and put up a storm barometer for the use of the fishermen at Herne Bay.

A barometer, as you know, is the weather glass in which one may read the signs of coming sunshine, or rain, or breeze, or violent gale. A fisherman's eye is keen to read the signs of the weather in the cloud, the mist, the way of the wind, the motion of the sea. But a barometer is better and surer. Its rising or falling quicksilver tells a tale that may be trusted. If it says “Storm,” the fishermen will take heed, and not venture out upon the water unless the need is very, very dire. The glass saves life.

Before long, the storm barometer was fixed in its station at Herne Bay on the coast of Kent, and wives and children had cause to bless the useful instrument which gave timely warning of the coming tempest, and so prevented the loss of the husband and father's life.

Wonderful was the chain of deeds. In the days of the Black Prince and King Edward III. William of Wykeham had built his school, out of love for learning, and for the boys of England. Centuries later, Kentish fishermen, who perhaps did not know his name, and never heard of his school, had reason to bless his memory in the gift of Frank Buckland, the grateful scholar.

Thus should the present time return thanks to the past time.

The Swiss naturalist breathed his grati-

tude into the strange name of an ancient bird.

Buckland kept alive the good name of William of Wykeham, not merely by entering it in his journal, but by doing a work of mercy for his neighbours.

You girls and boys who read this little history of grateful scholars are yourselves learners. Already you owe much to elders and teachers. The debt is great. Think of the teacher always with thankful memory, and let your acts of kindness be the tokens of your recollection.

And you, like the emperor, may some day take the pen, and look back over the years that have rolled past since last you answered the call of the register, and write—*Good teachers.* F. J. GOULD.

MEETINGS AND SOCIETIES.

ABERDEEN UNITARIAN CHURCH.

MR. WEBSTER'S FAREWELL.

WE are indebted to the *Aberdeen Free Press* for the following account of the close of Mr. Webster's memorable ministry in Aberdeen :—

Rev. Alexander Webster, who is retiring from the pastorate of the Unitarian Church congregation, preached his farewell sermons last Sunday. In the morning he gave a survey of his ministry, and in the evening he spoke on the subject, “The Justification of the Unitarian Ministry.” At the morning service he said that the survey which he had to take in parting from his ministry must needs go beyond the period over which it extended. He perceived that he was made a preacher by natural selective influences, traceable to his ancestry. As far back as he could trace the spiritual character of his forebears they appeared as serious people of the type called “God-fearing.” Calvinists nominally, they were Dissenters really, too sympathetic and humane to accept the reprobation of any soul without doubt and demur. He never was converted in the orthodox sense, but he was early spiritually regenerated and born in soul after a long and painful process of parturition from Calvinism. At seventeen his apprenticeship as a preacher began. He was a member of a class of young men and women which met on Sunday mornings for religious edification. He took his turn in the statement of spiritual experience and view, and was always in the state of larger hope. His first sermon was delivered in the City Hall Saloon, Glasgow, in 1863, to the congregation ministered to by Rev. Peter Hately Waddell. The congregation had for its title “The Christian Union for the Church of the Future.” He also gave a second sermon to that congregation, so that his actual preaching began 47 years ago. When he first entered a Unitarian pulpit to preach it was to meet an emergency which had occurred in the ministry at Paisley. Strange to say, he was brought to it by one of his boyish companions, who introduced him to the Paisley congregation. It was the hand of John Page Hopps that claimed and consecrated him for the Unitarian ministry. When he entered it he knew not to what he was being led, but he gave himself to it willingly and wholly. It had been his vital occupation and his spiritual joy. He had never had any regret for entering upon it, never a doubt as to its rightness, never any grudge for its claims. He had lived for it, and he thanked God for the strength which enabled him to continue in it. He believed that with the exception of Rev. George Harris he could show a wider extent of propaganda than any

other Unitarian minister in Scotland. He had been resident minister in five different shires, preached or lectured in eighteen different shires, and presented the Unitarian faith by his voice in 78 Scottish towns. He had written and delivered nearly 1,800 sermons, and apart from his ministry he had given many lectures to societies of different sorts. He had conducted 298 open-air meetings, and had held 16 public debates. He believed that his publications had been more numerous than those of any other Unitarian minister in Scotland. He had published eight books, and pamphlets to the number of 47,500. He believed that he had gone on the lines of the thinking and doing of his forefathers progressively. The Unitarian Church was the legitimate successor of the Original Secession Church. Its aim at a spiritual religion without priest or ritual on the lines of science and developed moral experience, was essentially the same as the discontented devout seceders had. He had not the experience of the power of the Unitarian ideal, but he had faith in it, and he left Calvinism behind with an instinctive feeling of having thrown off bondage and putridity. He resolved at the outset that he would speak what he thought, and use no phrases, however pious or unctuous, that did not express his convictions. All through those years he had read and studied as widely and deeply as he could. He had gone with science as much as was possible, followed art to the utmost of his power, and endeavoured to keep abreast with all movements for human liberation and enlightenment. He had keenly felt the responsibility of a preacher, and sought to rise to the dignity of his office. He had always taken high ground in his preaching and had avoided sensationalism, sentimentalism, and pulpit trickery of all sorts. He thought he could safely appeal to his congregations when he said that he had never been flippant, low-toned, or in any way irreverent. He did not believe in artificial solemnity, in pious dulness, in pulpit sanctimoniousness, and he trusted he never had shown the slightest tincture of these. He disliked the conventional cant of the pulpit, and affected unctuousness, the pharisaic whine, the autocratic pomposity so common in preaching. He hoped he had never shown any of these in his manner. He had held the Gospel to be the news of an omnipotent goodness, working everywhere for the benefit of the organisms that lived by it. He could not identify the Gospel with any dogmatic scheme based on an incident or any single series of incidents deemed sacred.

UNITARIANISM IN ABERDEEN.

Speaking on "The Justification of the Unitarian Ministry," he said that the Unitarian ministry in Scotland was of the nature of an invasion. It was charged with ideas radically different from that set forth by the dominant ecclesiastical authority. It found there a dogmatic prepossession with a history dating from the middle of the seventeenth century, fortified by traditional heroism and made sacred by conventional piety. Its work was that of dispossession and the introduction of ideas more fruitful. It appeared as an opponent of an established body of theological thought, and had to dissolve the accepted dogmas and disseminate other thoughts. It practically set itself against the training, the prejudices and the interests of a people amongst which Calvinism had been set up as the absolute truth. Such procedure needed thorough justification. It was not to be undertaken as a dashing polemic or conducted as a wayward controversy, but entered upon with an enlightened concern for truth, and maintained with rationalness and spiritual integrity. At the outset it might seem an altogether unwarrantable and hopeless thing to attempt to dissolve inbred ideas and disestablish dogmatic authority. If the effort

was ever to succeed it must be through fiery revolution, or by slow process of disintegration and new growth. The one fundamental continuously asserted principle in the religious life of Scotland was freedom of conscience. The Unitarian ministry represented the will and purpose of applying that principle thoroughly. The Unitarian declared that the principle held all round. What was reckoned heterodoxy, almost blasphemy, in Channing, Parker, and Martineau had now become the orthodoxy of the "theological centre." All those thirty-eight years he had breathed the heresies which the advanced men in other bodies were beginning to declare. By these bodies he had been reprobated and called "Atheist," "Unbeliever," "Apostate," and "Subverter of the Faith." If he had sought revenge he could not have got it in a sweeter form than that in which it had come in their conversion. They were all virtually Unitarians, teaching more or less explicitly what they denounced him for teaching plainly. He knew they would not admit being Unitarian, and he did not seek to pin them to a name, but the significance and actual value of their change of thought told on the Unitarian side and on no other. He did not wish to make more of that than he should. He knew the confused and ineffective state of thought in the churches generally. Their standards still haltered them, their traditions burdened them, and they were but partly renewed in mind. He saw in them signs of makeshifts, compromises, and hypocrisies. They lacked thorough enlightenment and spiritual enthusiasm, the faith that urged forward. He thought they had been blind to opportunity, and unworthy of their age. They had been unfaithful shepherds. They had not educated and led their people. They had not made popular what criticism had done. They had tabooed the new thought, and been obscurantists. Still even they had moved insensibly away from their old moorings. Judged by their altered thought, his thinkings had but the fault, if fault it was, that they had been too soon spoken and uttered in the outside. If he had been a minister of the Established Church, the Congregational, or even the U.F. Church, his preaching would have been all right, though somewhat precipitate, but being a Unitarian minister it was all wrong. That was the absurd verdict. He had been a Unitarian minister because he wanted an honest freedom of thought and speech allowed him on definite rational lines. Mr. Webster then referred to his work in different towns, and said he rejoiced that it was his work to break up the fallow ground in Scotland to make way for the movement.

WILLASTON SCHOOL.

It is announced that L. B. Freeston, of Willaston School, son of Mr. C. L. Freeston, of Haslemere, has won an open scholarship in Classics at New College, Oxford. This is the second first-class distinction which Willaston School has won recently at Oxford.

THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT.

THE PERILS OF MINING.

THE Bolton colliery disaster, attended apparently with a greater loss of life than any previous mining catastrophe in England, and coming so close upon that at Whitehaven, may serve to bring home to the average man the perils which even in normal times beset the life of the working miner. Few realise that every year upwards of 1,000 lives are lost in the mining operations of Great Britain. For example according to the most recent Board

of Trade Returns, the total number of fatal accidents in mines during November, 1910, was 141, compared with 119 in October, 1910, and 121 in November, 1909. This, with other facts, such as the miserable wage still paid to many engaged in mining, may help us to understand the unrest in the Welsh coalfields and other mining centres, and possibly may make us pause before hastily assuming that the employees who are striving for better conditions of life and labour are merely wicked malcontents, or else the weak-minded prey of professional agitators. Misguided spirits there are doubtless among miners, as among other classes of the community, but the standing wonder to those who have intimate knowledge of them and of the circumstances of their hazardous occupation, without which the bulk of our manufacturing processes could not be carried on, is not their shiftlessness and discontent, but their incredible cheerfulness and patience. This last and worst disaster of all, besides moving the public heart as it has done, should also stir the public conscience in the direction of permanently ameliorating the conditions and mitigating the risks of the miner.

MEDICAL INSPECTION AND CARE COMMITTEES.

In the recently issued report of the chief medical officer of the Board of Education for 1909 it is stated that out of the six million children on the roll of the elementary schools of England and Wales, about 10 per cent. suffer from serious defect of vision, from 3 to 5 per cent. from defective hearing, 1 to 3 per cent. from suppurating ears, 8 per cent. from adenoids or enlarged tonsils sufficiently serious to require surgical treatment, 20 to 40 per cent. from extensive and injurious decay of the teeth.

The routine medical inspection of all children upon at least two occasions during school life being everywhere (except in London) an accomplished fact, the report points out that the work of the medical officer, teacher, attendance officer, or school nurse will, as a rule, need to be supplemented by some arrangement which will secure the services of voluntary helpers associated together in Children's Care Committees. The more important duties of such a Committee are as follows:—

- (1) To follow up, where necessary, the work of medical inspection, endeavouring to secure the treatment appropriate in the case of each child.
- (2) To endeavour to bring about in special cases permanent improvement in the condition of the home by regular visits of a friendly character.
- (3) To co-operate with the local Education Authority in any arrangements which may be made for the provision of meals to necessitous children.
- (4) To interest themselves in the question of the employment of children about to leave school.
- (5) To give particular attention to the various groups of school children educated in special schools, exercising the function both of "care" and "after-care." Action of this kind will be necessary in the cases of physically and of mentally defective children.
- (6) To consider the question of the establishment of holiday homes and country schools, and the provision of play centres and means of recreation out of school hours, and to form connecting links, wherever possible, with any society or organisation for promoting the welfare of young people by recreative and educational means.
- (7) To inculcate in every possible way the idea of the prevention of disease among children, whether by the arrangement of lectures or informal talks to mothers or by educational effort of a practical nature in the home itself.

NEWS OF THE CHURCHES.

Special Notice to Correspondents.—Items of news for this column should be sent immediately after the event, and should reach the editor on Wednesday, except in the case of meetings held too late in the week to make this possible.

Ashton-under-Lyne : Richmond Hill.—A sale of work to clear off the debt on the current account has just been held, and nearly £43 was realised. The proceedings were opened on Thursday, December 15, by the Mayor, Alderman Waterhouse, and on Saturday, December 17, by Mrs. Graeme Hamilton. The chair was taken by Mrs. J. W. Pollitt, and the Rev. H. Enfield Dowson made a cordial speech. The Rev. G. Evans, of Gorton, was also on the platform. The Rev. John Barron commences his ministry at Ballyhemlin, co. Down, on New Year's day, and will be inducted on January 3, by the Presbytery of Bangor.

Birmingham : Small Heath.—An interesting presentation of books was made to the Rev. W. C. Hall, by the teachers and scholars, when he took farewell of the Sunday-school on December 18.

Bradford.—The Rev. H. McLachlan, writing in the church calendar for January, says:—"The fierce controversy over the person and work of Christ, which has been waged in Germany has, of late, extended to England. The ultra-orthodox have united with the ultra-radical in denouncing Liberal Christianity. 'The Collapse of Historical Christianity,' is the title of an article in an Agnostic annual, and 'The Failure of Liberal Christianity' that of a lecture before the English Church Union. The recent translation from the German of 'The Christ Myth' adds fuel to the fire. I therefore propose to deal with 'The Christ Question' in a series of four evening sermons this month."

Coventry : Great Meeting House.—On December 24 a presentation was made to the minister, the Rev. G. Heavyside, on the completion of his 50th year of service at the Great Meeting House by Mr. A. R. Marrs, on behalf of the Sunday-school children.

Hindley : Presbyterian Chapel.—The churches in Lancashire have suffered a severe loss by the death of Mr. George Unsworth, which occurred at the residence of his son-in-law, Mr. Murray, of Ince, on Thursday, December 15, at the age of 86. One of the founders of the church in Astley, it was largely owing to his devoted work that it was kept alive during a very critical time, and established upon a firm basis. Mr. Unsworth was a trustee of the Hindley Chapel, and in previous years had held almost every office in church and school, having been church secretary, Sunday-school teacher, &c. He also took great interest in the choir. Though specially connected with Astley and Hindley, his loss will be felt by many in the neighbouring towns, as he always took the deepest interest in the Unitarian churches and schools throughout Lancashire, and up to the last was a familiar and welcome figure at their social functions. The funeral took place in Bedford Leigh Cemetery on Monday, December 19, the officiating ministers being the Rev. Peter Holt, of Astley, and the Rev. W. F. Turland, of Hindley.

Leeds : Mill Hill Chapel.—The service on Christmas Day was a musical one, the choir rendering, in adapted form, Dr. Bridge's cantata, "The Cradle of Christ." Christmas carols were also sung, and the preacher was the Rev. C. Hargrove. The feast of Christmas Day, he said, was no new feast; before ever the Gospel of Christ was preached our rude forefathers kept their "Christmas," the Feast of the Sun. To many that day was a festival which recalled the stories they had

just read (the Gospel and narratives of the birth of Jesus), and the music they had just sung. To others it was the great Feast of the Incarnation, the Feast of the coming of God down among men. To them it was not so; it was just the feast of a birthday. "Noel, Noel" the choir had sung, but Noel was merely a corruption of the Latin word *Natalis*, meaning "birthday." Only a birth, only a birthday, common to everyone born on one of the 365 days in the year, but that day was the property of them all. Not 1,900 years ago, not at Bethlehem only, but that day, and everywhere, was a new earth created and Christ was born to them.

Liverpool : Boys' Own Brigade.—The two Liverpool companies, which were started at the beginning of this year, have recently been inspected by the Rev. J. C. Ballantyne, the founder of the B.O.B., and the secretary of the Brigade Executive. On the afternoon of December 15, Mr. Ballantyne met the local committee, when an interesting conference on matters of organisation was held. The committee then adjourned to the Park Café, Mill-street, for tea, where they were joined by the officers and N.C.O.'s of No. 7 Company. This café is run as a workmen's club by the Liverpool Unitarian Temperance Society. At eight o'clock the two companies met in the large hall of the Domestic Mission in the presence of a number of friends, together with some of the boys' parents. A detailed inspection of each company by Mr. Ballantyne followed. No. 7 Company (Mill-street), under Captain A. McCann, mustered 55 officers and boys, and No. 8 Company (Hamilton-road) mustered 40 officers and boys. The chairman, Mr. C. Sydney Jones, then explained the order of proceedings, which began with company drill by No. 7, followed by a flag signalling display by a squad from No. 8 company, under the direction of Lieutenant Armitage. A contingent from No. 7 were then put through their physical drill by Lieutenant Williams, after which Staff Sergeant Metcalf superintended a display of stretcher drill, and the bandaging of two patients by the ambulance Corps of No. 8 Company. The two companies were then drawn up facing the platform, and Mr. Ballantyne, after a few words of kindly and helpful criticism, gave an inspiring address to the boys. A vote of thanks to Mr. Ballantyne was proposed by Mr. Laurence D. Holt, the local treasurer, and seconded by Mr. Lawrence Hall, the secretary, and carried with acclamation. While in Liverpool, Mr. Ballantyne also had a meeting with the officers of the new B.O.B. Company which is to be started early in the new year in connection with Hope-street Sunday-school and Band of Hope.

London : Peckham.—A social meeting of the congregation was held on Tuesday, 20th inst., when a cheque for £50 10s. 4d., representing the profits on the recent sale of work, was handed to the church treasurer by Mrs. Hayward, secretary of the Peckham branch of the League of Unitarian Women. The minister, Rev. L. Clare, and representatives of the Church Committee, thanked the ladies for the work they had accomplished in aid of the church funds. During the week preceding Christmas the choir members of Avondale-road Church went carolling round the district and made collections in aid of the charitable work of the church. The sum of £5 was realised in this manner. Carols were sung at both services on Christmas Day.

London : Stratford Unitarian Church.—The Rev. John Ellis writes in the church calendar as follows:—"There are evidences of vigorous life at Stratford, in the church, the Sunday-school, and the various institutions (although a larger attendance at the morning service is still a desideratum) in spite of the difficulties created by the building operations in progress. The increased light and warmth from the

electric instalment and the new heating apparatus, are symbolical of increasing light and warmth in the intellectual, social, and religious life of the church. I believe we are quite ready to take fullest advantage of the better opportunity provided by the splendid gift of our benefactor. We are able to see now what a fine suite of rooms Mr. Ronald P. Jones will formally hand over for our use on January 21 next. They are capacious, beautifully designed, and in every way well adapted to supply our needs. There is everywhere evidence of the best material and the best craftsmanship. Light, colour, comfort, and attractiveness are pervading features. We have a big job before us ere we can adequately show the donor our appreciation." The young people connected with the church went carol-singing on Christmas Eve, when a collection was taken on behalf of "Winifred House" (home for convalescent children) amounting to £1 4s. This is the third year that a collection has been taken in this way.

Manchester : Platt Chapel, Appointment.—The Rev. W. Whitaker, B.A., of Hull, has received and accepted a unanimous invitation from the congregation to become its minister in succession to the Rev. C. T. Poynting.

Plymouth.—With the settlement of the Rev. H. Rawlings as minister, there has been a revival of interest in the work of the church. A children's party was given on Christmas Eve, and it was, as usual, a very bright and happy occasion. About 100 children (including 40 Sunday scholars) sat down to tea, and this was followed by lively games. A Christmas cantata was rendered by the Sunday scholars, who had been admirably trained by the teachers, Miss Wakeham, Miss Demelweek, and Mr. Lethbridge, the first-named giving special care to the music. After a few words on the Sunday-school by Rev. H. Rawlings, book prizes were presented for good attendance and conduct during the past year, and presents from the Christmas tree were distributed.

NOTES AND JOTTINGS.

THE DEATH OF CHARLES LAMB.

In his essay on "New Year's Eve," Charles Lamb speaks of the "intolerable disinclination to dying" which specially haunted him in winter. "In a genial August noon, beneath a sweltering sky, death is almost problematical. At those times do such poor snakes as myself enjoy an immortality. Then we expand and burgeon. Then we are as strong again, as valiant again, as wise again, and a great deal taller. The blast that nips and shrinks me puts me in thought of death. All things allied to the insubstantial wait upon that master feeling; cold, numbness, dreams, perplexity; moonlight itself, with its shadowy and spectral appearance—that cold ghost of the sun, or Phœbus' sickly sister." He died after a short illness, the result of an accident, on December 27, 1834. His mind to the last, Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd tells us, was intent on kind and hospitable thoughts, and "he still murmured the names of Moxon, Proctor, and some other old friends" as he gradually sank into sleep. "On the following Saturday his remains were laid in a deep grave in Edmonton churchyard, made in a spot which, about a fortnight before, he had pointed out to his sister on an afternoon wintry walk as the place where he wished to be buried."

THE DUTCH CHURCH, AUSTIN FRIARS.

A tall block of offices has just been pulled down in Old Broad-street, and the Dutch Church which enshrines so many memories, and which has been almost completely hidden for so long, by other buildings, is once more revealed. It is, we believe, destined to

be shut in again by new erections before very long, but in the meantime it will be a pleasure to many lovers of old city churches to see plainly the row of eight high decorated windows, the queer dormer windows above these, and the high-pitched brown wooden roof. "The man who sells fruit and crysanthemums at the western door has not gone," says a writer in the *Manchester Guardian*. "One is grateful for the fresh colour of his wares against the smoked stone, and to find a fruit stall within the railings of a church pleases one with memories of French and Italian churches. Inside, the church, ordinarily so bleak and dark, is washed by the transitory light. For once you can see the length of it to the towering organ at the upper end. It is still a sombre and bare church, with naked spaces of stone all round the plain pews of the Dutch congregation in the nave, but the wreckers have let in enough light for one to read the letters at least of the Dutch inscriptions underfoot, and the strange heraldries of the arms of the old Merchants—Dutchmen—of London."

BJÖRNSSON'S DEFINITION OF CHRISTIANITY.

The following passage occurs in an address on "The Religious Views of Björnson and Ibsen" which was delivered by Kristofer Janson at the Berlin Congress. He is alluding specially to Björnson, who, as is well known, was an agnostic. "By the dogmatists he has been regarded as an iconoclast. In the preface to his play 'The King' he says, 'When my opponents want to characterise my work in a few words they say, 'He attacks the throne and the altar.' I think I have served mental liberty. It is wholesome, once in a while, in the land of a state church to remember what Christianity is. It is not an institution, still less a book, least of all a priestly robe or a house. It is life in God, according to the precepts and example of Jesus. Maybe there are people who imagine they attack Christianity when they examine the history, origin, or morality of a dogma. I don't think so. Honest investigation can only make it grow. Christianity, without its dogmas, will, in what is the kernel of it, remain for thousands of years after us. There will always be spiritually-minded people who through it will become nobler, some of them even great. I respect all of them. Among the Christians I have friends whom I love; never for a moment have I intended to attack their Christianity. I have no higher wish than to see them attempt, by its help, to change in full earnest some things in society.'"

OXFORD UNIVERSITY EXTENSION.

The annual report of the University Extension Delegacy, which has been presented to Convocation, gives a remarkable record of the year's work. It states that, during the past session, 1,434 lectures, distributed in 187 courses, were delivered at 144 lecture centres. This showed an increase at all points on the work of the previous year. A very powerful impulse was given to what may be described as the foreign department of the Delegacy by the vacation course for foreign teachers held in Oxford during August. This was a new departure, and it was attended with great success, the utmost good feeling being displayed by the students.

* * *

It is proposed to organise a summer meeting during August, 1911. Following the successful precedent of 1909, the lectures will be so arranged as to illustrate the history of Germany, and its contribution to literature, fine art, science, and thought. The work of the Tutorial Classes Committee has developed with remarkable rapidity, and thanks are given to Mr. Shackleton and the other Labour representatives who found time to contribute by their presence on the committee to the success of this work. Seven joint committees are now at work, and

39 classes, with 1,117 students, was the total number held last year. A petition has been received from a large number of the most experienced local secretaries urging the necessity for further recognition, financial and otherwise, of University work by the University and Colleges, and that increased opportunities should be afforded to the local centres for work of a progressively educational character.

A "STRANGE" DEPARTURE IN JOURNALISM.

The *Monmouthshire Evening Post* is to be congratulated on its courage and originality. On Christmas Eve it published, instead of a leading article, the whole of "the greatest Sermon that ever was preached," namely, the Sermon on the Mount. There is some justification for this departure when we remember that a newspaper commands a larger congregation than any minister of the Gospel, and that it is read by a multitude including many whom the churches do not reach; and we agree with the editor that, as Ruskin said in another connection, the only strangeness is that this thing should be so strange. There certainly seems to be every reason why, on the anniversary of the birth of the Founder of Christianity, the gospel which he preached should be put before the public in a Christian country; and if the solemn words which affect us so deeply when we read them in the New Testament seem totally out of place in the columns of a journal that chronicles political events, commercial transactions, police court news, and social functions with equal impartiality, that is only because the life of civilised communities does not, as yet, bear comparison with the ideal of perfection which Jesus set before us. The fault lies with us, and as soon as our public and private actions are more in harmony with the faith which we, as a nation, profess, the publication in a newspaper of the sayings of Christ will not call for notice as "a course absolutely unprecedented in daily journalism."

THE PUBLICATION OF GARIBALDI'S EPIC.

We learn from the *Daily News* that the hitherto unpublished cantos of Garibaldi's great autobiographical poem have now been given to the world. The work was written by the great Italian hero during his enforced stay on the island of Caprera, in 1862. A fair copy of his crabbed handwriting was made by his English lady friend, Mrs. Roberts, and it is to her devotion and industry that Italy is now indebted for a work of massive and spontaneous genius by Italy's most heroic figure.

* * *

The poem is made up of 30 cantos in blank verse, and its surprising merit consists not so much in its technical perfection as in the sustained grandeur and nobility of the conception. The eleventh canto is not new to Italian readers. The poet hero presented it during his life-time to the Municipality of Ravenna, with instructions that the proceeds should be devoted to the preservation of the little mud hut in the neighbouring pine wood where his wife, Anita, died in his arms while he was fleeing from the Austrians. In this canto Garibaldi described with infinite pathos this sad tragedy in his life.

GREENWICH TIME IN FRANCE.

France is about to adopt the Greenwich system, and mid-day in Paris will accordingly be the same as Greenwich, just as it is in Belgium, Spain, and Portugal. This will necessitate French clocks and watches being put back 9 minutes 21 seconds. The Paris Observatory signals the hour of midnight all over France, and the reform will be effected at this time, though the night when the alteration will take place has not yet been decided upon. One night, however, the signal will be given 9 minutes 21 seconds late, and the French people will have to put their watches right the next morning when they find out what has happened by consulting the public clocks.

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